Zero Retries Special Edition 2023-04-19

Zero Retries is an independent newsletter promoting technological innovation in Amateur Radio, and Amateur Radio as (literally) a license to experiment with radio technology.

About Zero Retries

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Zero Retries Administrivia - Substack Introduces "Notes"

By Steve Stroh N8GNJ

This issue of Zero Retries has no content regarding radio technology - thus the "Administrivia" label. I didn't want to take up the valuable space in a normal issue of Zero Retries, but I thought it was important to mention this topic. I mention this, briefly, because Zero Retries readers will undoubtedly see mentions of Substack Notes as a "replacement for Twitter" or other such clickbait headlines.

Zero Retries 0095 will be published on 2023-04-21 at 15:00 Pacific, as usual.

Substack, the platform used for publishing Zero Retries, now offers "Notes". Substack Notes is similar to the Twitter (and Mastodon) paradigm of publishing short text snippets, allowing "forwarding" (on Twitter, retweeting) and commenting.

When I began writing this story shortly after Notes debuted, my early opinion was that it was a hot mess because when I tried viewing Notes, I saw Notes from Substack writers I don't subscribe to and have never heard of.

I now think what I was seeing then was Notes from Substack writers (that I don't subscribe to and have never heard of) that had been "Restacked" (akin to being retweeted) by *Substack writers I do subscribe to*.

Substack Notes *still* seems to me to be a hot mess… just not *quite* as much of a hot mess as my initial impression. *Still a hot mess* because (from my brief research) it appears that the only way one can "tune" one's Notes feed is to unsubscribe (entirely) from a Substack newsletter.

As an example, there's one Substack writer I follow whose newsletters are interesting and focused. But that writer's Notes feed is just a stream of irrelevant drivel that I don't have any interest in. Yet I cannot turn off *that* writers Notes in *my* Notes feed… except by unsubscribing entirely to that author's newsletter.

I value my time more than to slog through irrelevant drivel. I read Substack newsletters for high quality content - higher Signal-to-Noise Ratio (SNR)… not *lower* SNR!

Thus, to me, Substack Notes needs more work[1] and for the immediate future, I won't add Zero Retries content to the current cacophony that is Substack Notes.

Substack Threads

As I explained here, Substack Threads are …

> … tweet-length (1-3 sentences) postings (newsletters) that encourage general discussion.

The Editor for Substack Threads is minimalist compared to the Editior for "Posts". I'm sure this was done both to model the Twitter (very minimalist) editor and encourage more frequent postings from Substack.

I've used Threads a few times in Zero Retries for time-sensitive topics:

- Breaking - BridgeCom Systems BCM-220 Back In Production
- IC-905 Introduction - First Impressions
- Livestream of Icom IC-905 Introduction - 18:10 Pacific
- Real Satellite Cellular Telephones in 2023
- Unbuilt Heathkit HD-4040 TNC For Sale

As I became aware of the pending introduction of Substack Notes, I deferred my use of Threads . Now that I've seen Notes, I like Threads much more, and I ~~think~~ thought Threads is more useful for what I want to do with Zero Retries.

Update - "Threads" was a pilot project, now concluded.

While it seems I can still compose and send "Threads" (the "Compose a Thread" button is still displayed in my Substack Dashboard), while I was looking up a quick reference, I found a Substack support article about Threads that states

> *Update: The Threads pilot has concluded and launched under a new name, Substack Chat.*

Pending some other changes to publishing Zero Retries on Substack, I haven't yet activated Substack Chat. Substack Chat is yet another paradigm that I haven't yet explored for use for Zero Retries. Stay tuned…

Thus, I don't know whether to continue using Substack Threads on Zero Retries, or not. I normally would ask for a clarification on this from Substack Support. Unfortunately, one of

Substack's growing pains is their support to Substack writers like me (who haven't activated paid subscriptions and thus not generating revenue for Substack) is, increasingly, lacking[2].

Speaking of Twitter…

Speaking of Twitter… in my opinion, Twitter no longer provides much Zero Retries Interesting information, and thus I've almost entirely ceased using it.

Join the *Fun* on Amateur Radio

If you're not yet licensed as an Amateur Radio Operator, and would like to join the fun by *literally having a license to experiment with radio technology*, check out **Join the Fun on Amateur Radio** for some pointers.

Zero Retries Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) - In development 2023-02.

Closing the Channel

In its mission to highlight technological innovation in Amateur Radio, promote Amateur Radio to techies as a literal license to experiment with radio technology, and make Amateur Radio more relevant to society in the 2020s and beyond, Zero Retries is published via email and web, and is available to everyone at no cost. Zero Retries is proud *not to participate* in the Amateur Radio Publishing Industrial Complex, which hides Amateur Radio content behind paywalls.

My ongoing ***Thanks*** to:

- Tina Stroh KD7WSF for, well, *everything!*
- **Pseudostaffers** that write about about "Zero Retries Interesting" items on their blogs that I don't spot:
    - Dan Romanchik KB6NU
    - Jeff Davis KE9V
- **Newsletters** that regularly feature Zero Retries Interesting content:
    - Amateur Radio Weekly by Cale Mooth K4HCK is a weekly anthology of links to interesting Amateur Radio stories.
    - Experimental Radio News by Bennet Z. Kobb AK4AV discusses (in detail) Experimental (Part 5) licenses issued by the US FCC.
    - TAPR Packet Status Register has been published continuously since 1982.

    - Other Substack Amateur Radio newsletters recommended by Zero Retries.
- **YouTube channels** that regularly feature Zero Retries Interesting content:
    - HB9BLA Wireless by Andreas Spiess HB9BLA
    - KM6LYW Radio by Craig Lamparter KM6LYW (home of the DigiPi project)
    - Modern Ham by Billy Penley KN4MKB
    - Tech Minds by Matthew Miller M0DQW
- The Substack email publishing platform makes Zero Retries possible. I recommend it for publishing newsletters.

If you're reading this issue on the web and you'd like to see Zero Retries in your email Inbox every Friday afternoon, just click below to join ~~100~~ ~~200~~ ~~300~~ ~~400~~ *500* ~~600~~ ~~700~~ *800+* other readers:

Subscribe now

Please tell your friends and co-conspirators about Zero Retries - just click:

Share Zero Retries

Offering **feedback or comments** for Zero Retries is equally easy - just click:

Leave a comment

If you're a fellow smart person that uses **RSS**, there *is* an **RSS feed for Zero Retries**.

Zero Retries (N8GNJ) is on Mastodon - n8gnj@mastodon.radio - just click:

Zero Retries / N8GNJ on Mastodon

Email issues of Zero Retries are "instrumented" by Substack to gather basic statistics about opens, clicking links, etc.

More bits from Steve Stroh N8GNJ:

- SuperPacket blog - *Discussing new generations of Amateur Radio Data Communications - beyond Packet Radio (a precursor to Zero Retries)*
- N8GNJ blog - *Amateur Radio Station N8GNJ and the mad science experiments at N8GNJ Labs - Bellingham, Washington, USA*

Thanks for reading!
Steve Stroh N8GNJ / WRPS598 (He / Him / His)
These bits were handcrafted (by a mere human, not an Artificial Intelligence bot) in beautiful Bellingham (The City of Subdued Excitement), Washington, USA.

2023-04-19

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Blanket permission granted for TAPR to use any Steve Stroh content for the TAPR Packet Status Register (PSR) newsletter (I *owe* them from *way* back).

1

When / if Substack *does* sort out the issues with Substack Notes, it *could* be useful to Zero Retries for, example, to publish the ZR > BEACON items as Notes instead of publishing them in Zero Retries (including the 80% that I don't have space for).

2

I seem to be getting "ghosted" by Substack Support - support tickets are going unanswered. So for this mundane question, I won't try.